

Job#428-714-78

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Branch : ORPA/AF






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The Organization of African Unity

*Central Intelligence Agency
National Foreign Assessment Center*

July 1978

Key Points

- The formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 was the outcome of mounting concern among African leaders over a trend toward polarization of moderate and radical African states in the early 1960s.
 - Historically, there had never been a political structure encompassing all of Africa's diverse groups, but as independence from European colonialism gained momentum, multiple movements for African unity sprang up.
 - The first, comprising 12 moderate French-speaking countries, was formed in Brazzaville in December 1960. This was countered by the creation a month later of a Casablanca Group linking six radical states in North and West Africa. A number of moderate English-speaking states, concerned about the Casablanca Group's ideological stance, in 1962 joined with the Brazzaville Group, which then became known as the Monrovia Group. A preindependence lobby of representatives of liberation movements and of states from outside the area was active in East and Central Africa.
 - The moderates and the radicals both proceeded to create institutions and adopt charters presenting their claims to speak for Africa.
- By early 1963 the African voice was shrill and divided, and on every side there was a growing desire for a united organization. As a result, a meeting of all the African foreign ministers was held in Addis Ababa in May 1963 for the purpose of drafting a new charter for a continentwide organization.
 - Although it was based on a separate Ethiopian draft, the proposed charter drew extensively on the ideas formulated earlier by the

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Monrovia Group. The follow-on summit meeting of all African heads of state finalized the charter and created the OAU as the sole all-African political institution—actions subsequently ratified by the member states.

- Regional organizations continue to exist and are accorded observer status in the OAU. They are expected to conform to the OAU charter, however, and to have a rational geographic base and some economic or technical function.
- Since its earliest years, the Africans have increasingly insisted that the OAU should be the first forum to which African disputes are referred, that there should be no interference in the internal affairs of African states, and that borders existing at the time of independence must be acknowledged.
- Acting under these principles, the OAU has been involved in the entire range of African crises over the 15 years of its existence: Algerian-Moroccan border clashes, Ghanaian harboring of subversive elements, recurring interventions in Zaire, the Nigerian civil war, the Israeli occupation of Egyptian territory, Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence, Somali territorial claims against Ethiopia and Kenya, the Angolan civil war, and dozens of lesser disputes around the continent.
- In dealing with these problems, the OAU frequently works through international committees or plenary meetings so that national concerns are played down and all viewpoints are represented. It acts cautiously, with a heavy emphasis on factfinding and on discussions conducted by high-level mediators.
 - With a few exceptions, it has managed to keep African problems out of the UN and other non-African forums.
 - Actual solutions have been rare, with the OAU generally satisfied to defuse open conflicts and to keep disputants talking until they reach some accommodation of their own accord.
 - Unlike the Organization of American States and the League of Arab States, which generally seek UN or third-party intervention to settle disputes in their areas, the OAU increasingly views attempts to impose the advice of outsiders as patronizing and an affront to African independence.
- The OAU also performs a valuable, though often unheralded, service to its members by representing African interests to the outside world.
 - It works within the UN through the African Group, which it has transformed into an effective bloc, and it uses every other interna-

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ational organization in which Africans are members to enhance Africa's role and increase its benefits.

—The one institution bringing all the states together, it is the agent for lobbying efforts and the chief organizer of prestigious events such as African trade fairs and cultural festivals.

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ADDENDUM

The 1978 summit elected Edem Kodjo of Togo to serve as OAU secretary general for the next four years, replacing William Eteki, who declined to seek reelection. The summit also elected five assistant secretaries—an addition of one to provide regional representation for southern Africa. The assistant secretaries elected were Peter Onu of Nigeria, Nouredine Djoudi of Algeria, A. N. Chimuka of Zambia, Paul Etiang of Uganda, and Murengo Donat of Rwanda. These changes will probably lead to adjustments within the Secretariat.

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Africa



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OAU MEMBER STATES

Country *	Date of Admission	Country *	Date of Admission
Algeria	1963	Madagascar	1963
Angola	1976	Malawi	1965
Benin	1963	Mali	1963
Botswana	1966	Mauritania	1963
Burundi	1963	Mauritius	1968
Cameroon	1963	Morocco	1963
Cape Verde	1975	Mozambique	1975
Central African Empire	1963	Niger	1963
Chad	1963	Nigeria	1963
Comoros	1975	Rwanda	1963
Congo	1963	Sao Tome and Principe	1975
Djibouti	1977	Senegal	1963
Egypt	1963	Seychelles	1976
Equatorial Guinea	1969	Sierra Leone	1963
Ethiopia	1963	Somalia	1963
Gabon	1963	Sudan	1963
Gambia	1965	Swaziland	1968
Ghana	1963	Tanzania	1963
Guinea	1963	Togo	1963
Guinea-Bissau	1973	Tunisia	1963
Ivory Coast	1963	Uganda	1963
Kenya	1963	Upper Volta	1963
Lesotho	1966	Zaire	1963
Liberia	1963	Zambia	1964
Libya	1963		

* Country names are given as of 1978 throughout the paper.

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The Organization of African Unity

Membership

The OAU accepts as members the independent states¹ of the African continent and surrounding islands—a total of 49 countries. All eligible states are members—indeed, OAU membership has become a symbol of independence. Beginning with 31 charter members, the organization has admitted new states as they have become independent. This is done with the approval of a simple majority of the existing membership. The option of resigning, following one year's written notice, has never been taken up by a member state.

The principle that membership is by states, rather than by governments, was established at the very beginning. Togo's President Olympio had been invited to attend the constituent meeting in Addis Ababa in May 1963, but was overthrown by a coup before the meeting took place. Although his successor, President Grunitsky, did not attend the meeting, Togo was accepted as an observer and was recognized as the 32nd charter member when it signed the document shortly after the summit. The consensus of the debate on the issue was that change of government does not affect membership status.

English and French were readily accepted by the Addis Ababa conference as the two official languages of the OAU. There was, however, considerable sentiment that African languages should be accorded some status in an African body, and a resolution was adopted which provided that any African language for which translation facilities were available could be used. The Arabic-speaking group has used this as the basis for making Arabic the unofficial third language of the organization.

¹ South Africa is excluded because of an OAU proviso that an independent state is one "under indigenous African rule."

Charter

The OAU Charter signed in Addis Ababa on 25 May 1963 has over the years remained virtually unchanged. It enunciates the principles to which the organization adheres and lays out its purposes.

The seven principles are:

- Sovereign equality of all member states.
- Noninterference in the internal affairs of states.
- Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence.
- Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration.
- Unreserved condemnation of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighboring states or any other state.
- Dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories that are still dependent.
- Affirmation of a policy of nonalignment with regard to all blocs.

The enunciation of purposes parallels the political statement of principles and also extends the OAU into the economic and social fields. The five purposes cited are:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states.
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and their efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa.
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and independence.

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- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa.
- To promote international cooperation, with due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The OAU has no provision for sanctions to enforce its resolutions. It depends on persuasion and, in essence, seeks to achieve unity and cooperation through consensus. This low-key approach is reflective of African culture and probably accounts in large measure for the continuing acceptance of the organization. While it lends an appearance of indecision and procrastination, it usually avoids the brittle divisiveness that show-down voting and punitive actions would generate. The OAU system allows considerable opportunity for political posturing, while ensuring that any official decisions receive long consideration and general backing. The principles of nonintervention and territorial integrity have become more entrenched with passage of time.

Institutions

The OAU Charter set up institutions to carry out the work of the organization—the Assembly of Heads of State and Government; the Council of Ministers; the General Secretariat; and a group of special commissions.

The *Assembly of Heads of State and Government*—whose annual meeting is commonly referred to as the OAU summit—is the “supreme organ” of the OAU. Each member state is entitled to representation at the summit and has equal weight there.

The Assembly discusses matters of common concern to the African nations, considers resolutions prepared for it by the Council of Ministers, and hears reports submitted by the Secretary General, OAU specialized commissions, and ad hoc committees. Members may also raise questions not listed on the agenda.

Decisions at the summit require a two-thirds majority of the membership, except for procedural questions which need only a simple majority. No OAU action is binding unless it has been

accepted by the Assembly. Implementation is up to the member states.

The annual summit is the most highly publicized aspect of the OAU's activity, largely because the coming together of a number of heads of state is in itself a noteworthy event. Almost invariably, there is a buildup of anticipation that the summit will make major political decisions, followed almost as inevitably by disappointment when this proves not to be the case.

OAU summits generally last two to four days; most of the sessions are closed to nonparticipants, although representatives of the UN and of recognized African liberation movements are accorded observer status. Discussions at the summits are off the record, and formal speeches are discouraged. This format permits a give and take among the African leaders that would be impossible if the deliberations were open. The objective is to arrive at a consensus on the issues laid before the meeting. When this is possible, decisions are made on the spot, without referral back to the member states for ratification. Where no agreement can be reached, the tendency is to appoint an ad hoc study committee or to refer the issue back to the regular OAU machinery—in effect, to postpone action. Substantive issues are very seldom put to a vote.

Informal meetings outside the conference room are an important aspect of the summits, for they permit the heads of state to deal with one another outside accepted regional and ideological frameworks. Moreover, they emphasize the personal kind of political exchange that is far more important than institutional politics in the African context in which the leaders operate most of the time. Given the thinness of the political leadership of most African countries, an OAU summit can directly involve most of the continent's policymakers. The heads of state of newly independent countries are introduced to established African leaders through these meetings; the same holds true of new leaders who come to power in older countries through coups or other forms of succession.

It has become the accepted practice to hold the annual summit around the middle of the year, so

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that agreed positions on matters of concern to Africa can be worked out prior to the UN General Assembly meeting in September.

In addition to endorsing resolutions on political topics, the summit has the final say on the OAU's own administration. It elects the Secretary General and four assistant secretaries general, approves the budget, and effects occasional reorganizations. It also selects the annual chairman of the OAU.

Selection of the chairman—normally the head of state of the country hosting the summit of a given year—is made with the kind of political horse-trading characteristic of international organizations. Given the prestige of the chairmanship and the publicity given to the host country, selection is much sought after. The choice is generally made about two years in advance² and considerable effort is made to see that the rotation is accomplished with due regard to the size, location, language, and political orientation of host countries.

The choice of chairman and locale involves a number of intangibles. Since the number of chiefs of state attending a summit frequently becomes a popular measure of the "success" of the meeting, African leaders frequently use this as a means of indicating a political stand. The 1977 summit in Gabon, for example, brought a large turnout of presidents of moderate French-speaking countries—a group which until then usually ignored the OAU—to demonstrate solidarity with one of their own kind. The chairmanship in the early years gave African legitimacy to controversial leaders like Nasir and Nkrumah, and more recently to shaky ones like Mobutu and Amin.

The rotating venue stimulates loans for fixing up the host cities and building accommodations. In addition, it can foster symbolic gestures, such as Haile Selassie's appearance at the Mogadiscio summit in 1974 to demonstrate Ethiopia's "reconciliation" with Somalia.

The chairman is the recognized spokesman of the OAU for the year of his tenure, and he

² The 1979 summit is tentatively assigned to Liberia, and the 1980 summit to Sierra Leone.

projects the image of the OAU for the year he holds office. Some chairmen, like Bongo in 1977-78 and Amin in 1975-76, are extremely active, while others—like Ramgoolam in 1976-77—are passive. Numayri, who will be chairman in 1978-79, is unlikely to lead the OAU in adventurous directions. The political orientation of the chairman has some effect on the OAU, though this is diminished by the character of the organization itself. It shows up primarily in the type of issue selected for public comment.

The *Council of Ministers* is composed of the foreign ministers or other designated ministers of the member states. It meets semiannually for sessions that run about seven to 10 days. The foreign minister of the country hosting the annual summit serves as chairman of the Council of Ministers for the year.

One meeting of the Council, usually held in February, is devoted primarily to budgetary and administrative questions. The other immediately precedes the summit and is devoted to preparing the agenda and drafting the proposals to be considered by the heads of state. The budget sessions at one time met in Addis Ababa, but since the Ethiopian revolution they have rotated among various host cities and the local foreign minister has chaired the meeting. The agenda session almost always meets in the same city as the summit.

The Council is the principal deliberative body of the OAU, though its resolutions, which can be adopted by a simple majority, must be submitted to the Assembly of Heads of State for approval. Resolutions of the Council, though they are not binding on the member states, are widely publicized and can have considerable political effect.

Council resolutions are frequently approved by the summit without further consideration if they are generally acceptable and there is a press of other business. Thus, the Council often sets OAU policy on secondary issues, while those of prime concern are decided by the heads of state. There are occasions when the point of view of a country's foreign minister and its president conflict, so that a single country might take a

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different position in the council and at the summit.

The OAU *Secretariat*, located in Addis Ababa, carries out the day-to-day work of the organization.

It is headed by a secretary general, named to a four-year term by the Assembly of Heads of State. Four assistant secretaries general are similarly appointed. One of the few established requirements for the post of secretary general is the ability to speak both English and French.

There was a year's delay in naming the first secretary general, to allow for charter ratification and other matters. For this interim period, Ethiopia provided a provisional secretary general, Tesfaye Gebre-Egzy, assisted by another Ethiopian, Kifle Wodajo, and other personnel who set up a civil service for the OAU.

At the July 1964 summit, Diallo Telli of Guinea was elected secretary general. He already had an international reputation and his name had been under consideration long before the summit. He easily won election over Emile Derlen Zinsou of Benin, a last-minute candidate. The four assistant secretaries general chosen in 1964 were Mohamed Sahnoun of Algeria, John Mombales of Kenya, Gratien Pognon of Benin, and S. U. Yokah of Nigeria.

Diallo Telli took the oath of office on 4 September 1964 at the opening of a special session of the Council. He soon became spokesman for Africa, whether or not this was ever intended by the OAU member states. Although he displayed remarkable skills, other African leaders came to resent his abrasiveness, his meddling, and his tendency to exceed the administrative framework of his post.

By the time of the 1968 summit, there was speculation that Diallo Telli would not be reelected. Preoccupation with the Biafran secession and the Nigerian civil war, however, prevented the heads of state from focusing on the contest for OAU secretary general. The only other candidate was a little-known Rwandan, Fidele Nkundabagenzi, who dropped out after the third ballot. Diallo had trouble getting a two-thirds

majority; he was not reelected until the sixth ballot.

By 1972 Diallo had lost the backing of key members of the OAU. Nigeria and Cameroon, in particular, made careful plans to have him replaced. When the election opened there were four candidates, but the Cameroonian, Nzo Ekganki, led all the way. On the fifth ballot, he received the needed two-thirds majority.

The morale of the Secretariat that Ekganki inherited was low and his efforts to make changes—undertaken without due caution—were sabotaged by staffers. In early 1974 he laid himself open to attack by signing a consultant contract with the Lonrho Company, which has well-known ties with South Africa. The contract was abrogated in the ensuing uproar, but Ekganki recognized that he had lost the confidence of the OAU members and announced his intention to resign. The resignation was to be effective the end of August, to allow time for the choice of a successor.

The immediate question was whether the Council should designate one of the assistant secretaries general to fill the unfinished term or whether the summit should elect a new incumbent for a full four-year term. The final decision was to elect a new secretary general.

At the Mogadiscio summit, the heads of state spent over 11 hours choosing Ekganki's successor. The eventual victor was William Eteki Mboumoua, a high-ranking Cameroonian technocrat.

Eteki's four-year tenure has gone fairly smoothly, and he is standing for reelection for the 1978-82 term. Although the names of a number of possible contenders have been floated, there is no discernible drive to depose Eteki.

The four assistant secretaries are carefully balanced to provide representation to all the major groups in the OAU. It is understood that election to these offices is determined more by country than by individual candidate. The countries can be changed at the quadrennial election, but while a country holds a particular post, the

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home government is authorized to replace the actual incumbent.

The assignment of duties within the Secretariat is the responsibility of the secretary general. Major changes of assignment among the assistant secretaries are rare. The only assistant secretary who figures significantly is the one responsible for political affairs, who frequently meets with journalists as the spokesman of the OAU. This position was held by Mohamed Sahnoun of Algeria until 1973 and by Peter Onu of Nigeria since that date. The other assistant secretaries are A.E. Osanya Nyyneque of Kenya for economic and social affairs, Noureddine Djoudi of Algeria for education and cultural affairs, and Kamanda wa Kamanda of Zaire for administration.

There is relatively little connection between the activities of the permanent staff and those of the OAU chairman. The chairman issues communiques and initiates calls for meetings, and the Secretariat manages the followup.

The Secretariat is divided into four departments, each headed by an assistant secretary general. Altogether, there are roughly 300 staff employees, drawn from more than half of the member states and several of the recognized liberation movements. They work in a separate office building in Addis Ababa.

Staffing of the Secretariat has been a chronic problem for the OAU. Especially in the beginning, when the African governments were unable to meet their own needs, it was difficult to recruit trained personnel. Efforts to employ people from the least developed African countries in order to help them gain experience have not been very successful.

Defaults in the payment of dues have reduced the funds available for Secretariat salaries, and the OAU's salary scale has always been noncompetitive with that of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa and other international units located in Addis Ababa. Salary scales were revised upward in 1970 and 1972, but remain relatively low.

Poor morale has been a constant complaint. The Secretariat has generally lacked effective

management, with resulting indiscipline. Employees do not have a strong identification with the OAU, and tend to form national or regional cliques. Some reportedly appeal to their own ambassadors for support in internal disputes. Negligent accounting for funds is also a recurrent problem.

The Ethiopian revolution in 1974 put a new strain on OAU staff. In place of the highly supportive backing of the former regime, the revolutionary forces have on occasion harassed Secretariat personnel and interfered with OAU operations.

Periodically, suggestions are made that the OAU headquarters should be moved away from Addis Ababa. These suggestions have failed to win much support, either because of the cost of moving the organization or because of a general reluctance among the member states to appear to set political standards of acceptability for hosting an OAU body.

The OAU's regular budget now amounts to approximately \$8 million annually, raised from assessments levied on the member states. Contributions are assigned according to the formula used by the UN; they are theoretically based on ability to pay, taking into consideration a mix of national income, per capita income, and economic dislocations. Nevertheless, delinquent payments are a continuing problem.

Special Commissions

The original plans for the OAU called for a number of special commissions to administer specific types of activity. These organizations have had a spotty history. They include the African Liberation Committee, which has led a virtually independent existence, and the Conciliation Commission, which was slow coming into being, never found a function, and was eventually replaced by ad hoc arrangements. The performance of special commissions for defense, education and cultural affairs, health and sanitation, and scientific and technical research has been little better. In the case of the last three, the greater efficiency of working through the UN's

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Economic Commission for Africa was soon obvious.

The 17-member *Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa*—commonly called the African Liberation Committee—is a semiautonomous arm of the OAU. The ALC, which maintains a permanent headquarters in Dar es Salaam, deals on a continuing basis with recognized African liberation movements. It also operates a Special Fund from which it provides financial aid to individual liberation groups.

The OAU's sense of urgency about the liberation of African territories still under colonial rule was expressed right from the start and is reflected in the Charter. The African Liberation Committee was established by acclamation at the founding summit in 1963.

The ALC originally had nine permanent members, named by the Assembly of Heads of State. Selection for membership took into consideration geographic proximity to the territories to be liberated and the country's record of providing assistance to national liberation movements. The initial members were Ethiopia, Algeria, Egypt, Uganda, Tanzania, Guinea, Zaire, Senegal, and Nigeria. Zambia and Somalia were added by the 1965 summit, and six additional permanent members—Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Libya, Mauritania, and Morocco—were named to the ALC in 1972.

From its formation, the ALC has been among the most active of OAU institutions. It meets twice a year, just prior to the meetings of the OAU Council of Ministers, and maintains its own secretariat and bank account. Interest in its activities, however, has been largely confined to its own members, with Tanzania in particular taking a proprietary role. There has been declining interest in the ALC, except among the more radical states, and the scope of its activity has narrowed as the number of nonindependent territories has decreased.

The semiannual meetings of the ALC, normally held in Dar es Salaam, hear reports on the current progress of the various liberation efforts and address to some extent the internal problems

of the liberation movements. OAU member states that are not members of the ALC may attend these meetings if they wish.

The ALC is funded by annual assessments levied on all members of the OAU and by solicitation of outside donations of money and military materiel. It receives a subsidy from the OAU Secretariat to cover its administrative expenses and is subject to OAU audits. The ALC insists that all aid to liberation movements should be channeled through it, but in practice it is often bypassed. Outside donors to the ALC have included foreign states, such as the USSR.

The ALC has three major committees. The Standing Committee on Finance authorizes expenditures, balancing the defense needs of the liberation movements against the availability of funds. The Standing Committee on Defense discusses the operations of the various liberation movements and training centers and reports their administrative and military requirements to the finance committee. The Standing Committee on Administration and General Policy deals with management issues.

The ALC administers two funds: the Special Fund comprising assessments paid by OAU member states and other donations and the General Fund maintained by payments from the OAU Secretariat. Arrears in contributions are a chronic problem—only a handful of states pay their assessments in full. The ALC's accounting procedures have never been considered satisfactory by OAU auditors. In particular, there is a pattern of failure to record payments made to the liberation movements.

The appointment of the ALC executive secretary is, in effect, left to Tanzania's President Nyerere. Nyerere argued that, since the security of the host country is involved, the executive secretary must be selected in consultation with the president of the host country and must be a national of that country. The position was filled by George Magombe of Tanzania until 1972, when he came under heavy criticism from some OAU members. He was replaced by Hashim Mbita, also of Tanzania.

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During the 1960s the ALC set up suboffices in Lusaka and Conakry for greater proximity to the liberation wars. These offices were also headed by nationals of the respective host countries, although their deputies could be from any OAU member state. Appointments were made after consultation among the host government, the OAU secretary general, and the ALC executive secretary. The Conakry office was closed after Guinea-Bissau achieved its independence.

Ever since 1964, problems related to the ALC have come up regularly at OAU Council and summit meetings. Recurrent items include recognition of various movements, levying of assessments, arrears, distribution of payments, ALC membership, and complaints about overspending.

The ALC was in operation before the OAU Secretariat and started out with a staff and a large budget completely independent from the rest of the OAU. When difficulties arose later, the Assembly felt it could not go back on the 1963 decision to create a separate committee, but OAU member states have long kept the ALC short of funds.

Complaints about the ALC prompted the 1969 summit to create a Committee of Seven to study the ALC's mandate, structure, and composition. The study group, after circulating questionnaires and interviewing representatives of the ALC secretariat and of the liberation groups, made its final report to the 1972 summit. The summit opted to leave things much as they were, except for adding six new members to the ALC and forcing a change of executive secretaries.

The ALC for many years operated several training camps and a military depot, located in Tanzania and staffed by seconded military experts paid by the OAU. These facilities were expected to serve various recognized liberation movements, though ZANU and ZAPU were the major users. One ZANU camp is still in operation. During the liberation war in Guinea-Bissau, the ALC also maintained a training camp in Guinea.

One of the key functions assigned to the ALC is to designate which liberation movements are

recognized by the OAU and entitled to its political and material support. In 1965 the Council of Ministers and the ALC agreed to establish three-member ad hoc commissions of inquiry to evaluate the effectiveness of particular liberation movements. They report their findings in sequence to the ALC, the Council of Ministers, and the OAU summit.

African Liberation Movements

PAIGC	African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
GRAE	Angolan Revolutionary Government in Exile
Frelimo	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
SWAPO	South-West Africa People's Organization
NAC	African National Congress
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
LMD	Movement for the Liberation of Djibouti
FLCS	Liberation Front for the Somali Coast
SPUP	Seychelles People's United Party
Molinaco	Comoros National Liberation Movement

During its first decade, the OAU, following ALC recommendations, accorded recognition to the PAIGC for Guinea-Bissau, the MPLA and the FNLA, then known as GRAE, for Angola, Frelimo for Mozambique, ZANU and ZAPU for Rhodesia, SWAPO for Namibia, the ANC and the PAC for South Africa, and the Ethiopian-backed LMD and the Somali-backed FLCS for Djibouti, SPUP for the Seychelles, and Molinaco for the Comoros. Those excluded from recognition were mostly frivolous movements.

The ALC later attempted—partly in response to pressure from the rest of the OAU—to assign priority to assisting movements actively engaged in fighting. By the early 1970s this trend had become a concerted effort to secure early independence for the Portuguese territories. The guerrilla struggle had come close to success in Guinea-Bissau, where the ALC was assisting the PAIGC with independence negotiations when the Portuguese regime in Lisbon was overthrown in 1974. The coup in Lisbon eventually led to Portugal's withdrawal from all its African colo-

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nies and the accession to power of OAU-recognized liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, and Cape Verde. In Angola, the OAU had by 1975 recognized all three liberation groups contending for power in the civil war. A special summit was eventually held to debate this divisive situation.

The main focus of the ALC has now shifted to Namibia and Rhodesia. The OAU has consistently recognized SWAPO as the only valid liberation movement for Namibia. The situation regarding Rhodesian groups is less clear, since both ZANU and ZAPU have had long-standing backing from the ALC. Since 1977, the OAU has recognized the Patriotic Front—ZANU and ZAPU together—as the approved liberation movement for Rhodesia, but does not restrict OAU members to supporting only the Front.

The smaller countries which had OAU-recognized liberation movements—Djibouti, Seychelles, and Comoros—have by now become independent states with full membership in the OAU. There have been fitful attempts—apparently instigated by Algeria—to get the OAU to recognize a Canary Islands liberation movement. The Council of Ministers adopted without discussion an ALC resolution to this effect at the 1978 budget session, prompting Spain to conduct an active lobbying campaign to prevent further action. Notice is occasionally taken of the continuing French administration of the islands of Reunion and Mayotte.

One notable exception to OAU recognition of liberation movements is Eritrea. During the Haile Selassie years, Ethiopia effectively insisted that the Eritrean separatist drive was an internal affair and not a subject for OAU concern. This position has persisted.

There were to be six other *special commissions* as the OAU was originally envisaged. These commissions, comprising the appropriate ministers of all member states, were to meet periodically, report to the Council of Ministers, and maintain some permanent staff. The plans have not materialized, and most of the special commissions have withered away.

The Defense Commission—with the enthusiastic backing of Ghana's Nkrumah—was the first of the commissions to meet. In sessions in October 1963 and February 1965, it agreed to study the formation of an African High Command but little interest was shown in the proposal. The commission remained dormant until the invasion of Guinea in 1970 stimulated its revival in December 1970. Since then it has continued half-heartedly to explore plans for a regional defense system, but has taken no action.

The first meeting of the OAU called for the creation of a Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration. It was anticipated that any OAU member, or the Council, or the Assembly might refer an issue to the commission for consideration, whether or not it was a party to the dispute. The commission would undertake to mediate, conciliate, or arbitrate only with the consent of the parties concerned.

The commission was very slow in taking shape. The 1965 summit finally appointed 21 member states to serve five-year terms on the commission, and gave it a small budget and an office in Addis Ababa. Nigeria was to provide the first chairman.

The commission did not hold its first meeting until December 1967—a session which turned out also to be its last. Because no case was ever referred to it, the Conciliation Commission was converted to an ad hoc basis in 1971.

The 1977 summit created an additional permanent committee to deal with intra-African disputes. Its members are Gabon, Madagascar, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia, Zaire, and Zambia; these are to be supplemented by three other states to be named by the OAU chairman on an ad hoc basis to deal with any particular dispute referred to the committee. Although this new arrangement has not been tested, it apparently is meant to allow the OAU to play a mediating role without the prior consent of the states concerned.

Lacking an active Conciliation Commission to deal with intra-African disputes, the OAU has made a practice of designating special committees or factfinding teams to do so. Appointments

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are normally made either by a summit or by the annual chairman. Once a committee has been assigned to a problem, it remains charged with it until the final report is accepted, often a matter of several years. In some instances—the Ethiopia-Somalia dispute is a notable example—an issue that had been closed flared up again and the committee that had dealt with it before was reactivated.

Ad hoc groups of varying size and importance have undertaken to study a wide range of problems affecting OAU member states. Special assignments have been undertaken by heads of state working in groups or individually, by the OAU secretary general, and by lower ranking officials.

The mission of these ad hoc groups is to investigate complaints and to conduct a dialogue with the parties concerned. They are not expected to settle problems, but rather to prevent them from escalating and to create an atmosphere in which the disputants can reach accommodation without political embarrassment. Border disputes, political subversion, and armed attacks are the most common type of complaints. OAU committees have also investigated broad international issues, such as the Middle East question and the economic impact of OPEC price increases, but the most serious African problems are referred to the next OAU summit.

The Economic and Social Commission met in December 1963 and in January 1965 to plan African economic cooperation, with the OAU Secretariat called on to provide preliminary studies. This arrangement proved unworkable from the start, since the OAU's competence in the field was overshadowed by the UN's Economic Commission for Africa and the OAU Secretariat was already overwhelmed by its workload.

Diallo Telli took the initiative in working out an agreement, concluded in November 1965, to allow reciprocal representation and coordination between the ECA and the OAU at international meetings where African economic and social matters are considered and to arrange cooperation on statistical services. Under this agreement, UN staff and money are contributed to the

preparation of working papers essential to OAU decisions. Paper work is shared between the ECA and the staff of the economic and social affairs department of the OAU Secretariat.

Following an OAU decision in the mid-1960s to reduce the number of specialized commissions, transportation and communications were absorbed into the Economic and Social Commission. It has proved difficult, even with the merger, to find a quorum for further biennial meetings of the commission.

The three other commissions activated in 1964—education and culture; health, sanitation, and nutrition; and scientific, technical, and research—all tended to leave most of their work to other international organizations. In 1967 they were merged into a single, enlarged Education, Scientific, Cultural, and Health Commission which has enjoyed some revival of interest. The commission's staff work is carried out in Addis Ababa for education and health matters and in Lagos and scattered specialized bureaus elsewhere for scientific matters.

This dispersal results in part from the fact that a scientific and technical organization already existed when the OAU was formed. The Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa South of the Sahara had been created by the colonial powers, and the African states continued to adhere to it when they became independent. During the 1960s, control of the commission shifted to the Africans, and the former colonial powers became associate members. The headquarters was moved from London to Lagos and the secretariat was Africanized. In May 1964 the old commission was dissolved and its operations turned over to the OAU's new Scientific, Technical and Research Commission. In addition to the Lagos headquarters, there are a Publications Bureau in Nairobi (previously in Niamey), an Inter-African Phytosanitary Bureau in Yaounde, an Inter-African Soils Bureau in Bangui, and an Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources in Nairobi. The organization maintains an extensive program of meetings and publications in the scientific field, largely financed from outside the OAU.

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Recently there has been a move among African states operating under the aegis of the OAU to branch out into providing joint services in specialized fields. A Pan-African Telecommunications Union and a Pan-African News Agency were established in late 1977.

Special Sessions

One of the major roles of the OAU is to deal with crises, and the principal devices it has used for this purpose are ad hoc committees and special sessions. There have been eight special sessions of the Council of Ministers and one special summit. The convening of special sessions was most prevalent in the earliest years, before the organization's permanent institutions—especially the Secretariat—were fully operational.

A special session of the council can be requested by any OAU member, but must be approved by two-thirds of the members. Any state that is unwilling to air a problem thus has a good chance of finding enough support to be able to prevent a special session. It is also necessary to find a member state willing to host the meeting.

The agenda for a special session must be circulated in advance, and only the items submitted at the time the meeting is requested can be included, thus avoiding the diffuse focus and massive documentation that characterizes the regular sessions. Issues raised in special sessions can be carried over to regular sessions, and this has frequently been done.

The rules for calling a special summit are similar to those for calling a special session of the Council. By the early 1970s it had become clear that mediation and conciliation efforts would be more effective if the heads of state were directly involved and since then it has been more common for OAU members to think in terms of calling special summits than special sessions of the Council. This escalation, however, has made it even more difficult to arrange for such a meeting.

The first special session of the Council of Ministers was held in November 1963 to discuss a boundary dispute between Algeria and Morocco

that predated the formation of the OAU. At the time, the special session was regarded as a substitute for referring the problem to the Conciliation Commission provided for in the OAU Charter but not yet in being. It was also understood that the role of the OAU was not to reach a decision based on the merits of the case, but to find a means of easing tension in the area. The special session appointed a seven-member ad hoc committee which reported back to five successive regular meetings of the council before adjourning in 1967. The final border agreement, signed in 1972, was reached through bilateral negotiations, though the work of the committee has been credited with making the negotiations possible.

The second special session of the Council of Ministers, in February 1964, dealt with two unrelated problems—a mutiny in Tanzania, which led to the calling in of British troops, and Somalia's border disputes with Ethiopia and Kenya. The Tanzanian issue pitted those African states—notably Ghana—pressing for creation of an African High Command against others seeking immediate military response on a bilateral basis to ease a temporary crisis. Advocates of the latter won Council support.

On the other issue, Somalia had sought support in the UN Security Council, but the UN Secretary General encouraged it to turn instead to the OAU. After the OAU Council appointed a committee to handle the problem, Somalia withdrew its request for UN conciliation. The 11-member committee called for a cease-fire and requested African states with diplomatic missions in the area to facilitate its implementation. Both border disputes were carried on the agenda for regular OAU sessions until 1967, when Somalia and Kenya reached an understanding. Meanwhile, Ethiopia and Somalia signed a joint agreement—arranged by Sudan—to assure peace in the border area. These Somali cases established the principle that African disputes are first submitted to Africans for settlement.

Two special sessions were held on the Zaire problem in 1964—one in Addis Ababa in September and another in New York in December. The UN force had been phased out in June, and

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by fall some African states had become concerned about the threat to Zaire's neighbors and Prime Minister Tshombe's recruitment of mercenaries. The first of these special sessions set up a 10-member commission, headed by Kenya, to encourage reconciliation. The commission, with the aid of private talks between Tshombe and Kenyatta, settled some bilateral issues between Zaire and its neighbors and also sent a special delegation to Washington to request the end of US military aid to Tshombe's government.

Following the Stanleyville (Kisangani) crisis in November and the ensuing Western intervention, Kenyatta recalled the commission, but it was so badly split that it accomplished nothing. Eighteen African states were among the countries seeking to refer the issue to the UN. A special session of the Security Council, held from 9 to 30 December 1964, eventually passed a resolution that left the Zaire problem to the OAU. To protect the appearance of African unity, a special session of the OAU Council of Ministers was held in New York during the UN session. It reaffirmed the position the Council had taken in September and continued the mandate of the commission. Divisions stemming in part from the Zaire issue prevented any action on the matter at the regular spring council meeting in 1965 and threatened to paralyze the summit as well. The dismissal of Tshombe as Prime Minister on the eve of the summit permitted the OAU quietly to drop the issue.

The fifth special session, in June 1965, was called primarily because of a threatened boycott of the approaching summit in Accra by member states that suspected Ghana of encouraging subversion against their countries. It passed a resolution recommending that all states attend the summit on the strength of promises it elicited from Ghana regarding control of exile activity. The summit was held in Accra in October, but many of the moderate French-speaking countries did not participate.

The Accra summit recommended that a special committee be created to work out what forms of African assistance should be given to Rhodesian liberation movements and called on

the UK to use force against Prime Minister Smith if necessary. When Rhodesia proclaimed its Unilateral Declaration of Independence the following November, the OAU reacted by calling a special session of the Council of Ministers. The meeting declined to commit African states to direct military action, though it did agree to certain contingency measures and set a short deadline for the UK to find a solution.

The seventh special session of the Council of Ministers was held in December 1970, after the Portuguese-backed seaborne invasion of Guinea in November. The episode revived calls for formation of an African task force, prompting Diallo Telli to schedule a meeting of the OAU Defense Commission to coincide with the special session. The Council decided to set up a special fund to aid Guinea, to increase OAU assistance to liberation movements fighting against the Portuguese, and to mandate the Defense Commission to study ways and means to improve African defense.

The Council held another special session in November 1973, in the wake of the Middle East war. This session considered economic cooperation between African and Arab states, action against Israel, and the use of oil as a weapon in southern Africa. Its only specific action was the creation of a seven-member committee to make contact with Arab countries through the Arab League, to study the effects of the oil embargo on African countries, and to discuss with Arab producers means of alleviating these effects.

As a followup to the proposals made by the special session, Arab-African meetings at the ministerial level were held in 1974 and 1976, and an OAU-Arab League summit finally took place in Cairo in March 1977. The Arabs promised to increase their financial assistance for African development, but they cited no amounts and made no provision for an African role in deciding how the aid would be used. The Africans, on their side, endorsed a resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Angola was the topic of the OAU's only special summit held to date. In August 1975 Amin, then serving as the annual OAU chair-

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man, appointed a 10-country ad hoc commission to go to Angola to study the claims of the three OAU-recognized liberation groups and to report back to him. The members of the commission split along ideological lines and could make no recommendations. When Portugal gave Angola its independence in November, some OAU members promptly recognized the MPLA as the official government.

The introduction, in the fall, of South African and Cuban forces into the Angolan civil war added to the Africans' dilemma. Most OAU states remained outwardly neutral, but the South African intervention, in particular, caused some of them to waver. Amin even proposed that he lead an OAU peacekeeping force to Angola. Calling a special session was the logical next step, though some members were concerned that this would deepen Amin's involvement.

After some backing and filling over the date, a special summit was scheduled in Addis Ababa for 10 to 12 January 1976, to be preceded by a two-day special session of the Council of Ministers. The more radical states were seeking OAU recognition of the MPLA government and the condemnation of South African intervention. The more moderate states proposed a counter-resolution calling for a coalition government and denouncing all foreign intervention. When it attempted to vote, the summit divided 22 to 22, with two abstentions--the closest the OAU had ever come to a real split.

The special summit adjourned without making a decision. Almost immediately afterward, Ethiopia recognized the MPLA government. Several other countries soon followed suit. By the time the regular budget session of the Council opened in February, a majority of the African states had recognized the MPLA government and Angola was admitted virtually without discussion to full OAU membership.

Algeria has been trying since late 1975 to get the OAU involved in settling the disposition of the former Spanish Sahara. The Algerians charge that the partition of the territory by Morocco and Mauritania has deprived its residents of their right to self-determination and

insist that the Polisario Movement is the legitimate representative of the Saharan people. They finally secured a resolution at the 1976 summit instructing a committee to organize a special summit. Although OAU members have been canvassed several times and although the 1977 summit reaffirmed the decision to hold a special session, the Algerians have never elicited sufficient support for such a meeting and the Sahara issue has yet to be seriously debated by the OAU.

Relations With the United Nations

One major function of the OAU is to coordinate African actions in relation to the United Nations. The May 1963 summit invited OAU member states to charge their representatives at the UN to form an African Group to assure cooperation and coordination among African states on questions of common interest. The UN African Group meets together to decide on candidates for UN posts and to discuss general strategy and issues requiring bloc voting. Its chairmanship rotates among African heads of missions.

The OAU maintains an office, headed by Dramane Ouattara of Mali, at UN headquarters in New York. Since 1972 this office has been accorded diplomatic privileges and immunities. The OAU also has an office in Geneva, accredited to the UN's European commission. These offices are part of the structure of the OAU's Economic and Social Commission.

The OAU is a recognized affiliate of the UN's major specialized agencies, including the International Labor Organization (ILO), the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). The closest collaboration is between the OAU and the UN's Economic Commission for Africa. Although it is answerable only to UNESCO, the ECA serves as the OAU's arm for coordinating African economic and social development. It has been effective in persuading African governments to harmonize some of their development policies, and it has spon-

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sored cooperative institutions such as the African Development Bank.

positions on such matters as law of the sea and North-South relations.

Special sessions of the UN General Assembly and major UN-sponsored international conferences have called forth significant OAU efforts to formulate and to lobby for agreed African

In recognition of the close bonds between the two organizations, the Secretary General of the UN normally attends OAU summits.

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OAU Summit Meetings

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Year	Date	Place	Chairman	Remarks
1963	22-25 May	Addis Ababa	Haile Selassie	Set up the OAU and adopted its Charter. Established the ALC.
1964	17-21 July	Cairo	Nasir	Concentrated on organizational matters, but also called for a boycott of South Africa.
1965	21-25 October	Accra	Nkrumah	Deplored the UK's failure to get a settlement of the Rhodesian issue. Rejected Nkrumah's proposal for an African Defense Force.
1966	5-9 November	Addis Ababa	Haile Salassie	Called for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against Rhodesia.
1967	11-14 September	Kinshasa	Mobutu	Concentrated on projecting a new image of maturity, unity, and realism.
1968	13-16 September	Algiers	Boumediene	Reaffirmed support of territorial integrity of Nigeria in the face of Biafran separatist effort. Also called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Arab territory.
1969	6-10 September	Addis Ababa	Ahidjo	Called for a cease-fire in the Nigerian civil war and tightened the internal administration of the OAU and the ALC.
1970	1-3 September	Addis Ababa	Kaunda	Clarified OAU responsibilities in the economic and social field and condemned continued Western arms sales to South Africa.
1971	21-23 June	Addis Ababa	Ould Daddah	Rebuffed Ivory Coast proposal for "dialogue" with South Africa.
1972	12-15 June	Rabat	Hassan	Condemned the UK for not taking effective steps to end the illegal regime in Rhodesia and called for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories.
1973	24-29 May	Addis Ababa	Gowon	Drafted declaration redefining economic relations with non-African powers.
1974	12-16 June	Mogadiscio	Siad	Contentious election of the secretary general, symptomatic of Arab-African friction.
1975	29 July-2 August	Kampala	Amin	Called for a cease-fire in Angola and urged acceptance of an OAU reconciliation committee. Refused to call for Israeli expulsion from the UN.
1976	2-6 July	Mauritius	Ramgoolam	Condemned various cases of foreign intervention, but deferred issues affecting individual interests of African states.
1977	2-5 July	Libreville	Bongo	Endorsed the Patriotic Front as sole recognized liberation movement for Rhodesia and created new conciliation committees to handle intra-African disputes.

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OAU Secretaries General



1964-72
Diallo Telli
Guinea

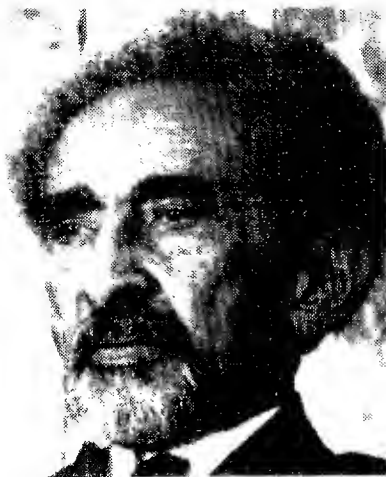


1972-74
Nzo Ekangaki
Cameroon



1974-78
Wm. Eteki Mboumoua
Cameroon

OAU Chairmen



1963
Haile Selassie
Ethiopia



1964
Jamal 'Abd Al-Nasir
Egypt



1965
Kwame Nkrumah
Ghana

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1966
Haile Selassie
Ethiopia



1967
Sese Seko Mobutu
Congo



1968
Houari Boumediene
Algeria



1969
Amadou Ahissane
Mauritania



1971
Kenneth Kaunda
Zambia



1971
Yusef Qul Dabbah
Mauritania



1977
King Hassan II
Morocco

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